

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, EAIR, WB, US, UK, FR, GW

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: IGS UNCERTAINTIES

REF: USBERLIN 293

1. SUMMARY: PA/BA ANNOUNCEMENT OF IGS SUMMER SCHEDULE HAS FOCUSED UNFRIENDLY PUBLIC COMMENT ON UNCERTAINTIES OVER IGS OPERATIONS AFTER APRIL 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF REALISTIC DATE FOR AIRLINES' MOVE TO TEGEL MAY BE POSSIBLE BY MID-MARCH, BUT UNCERTAINTIES OVER ROUTE SWAP AND FARE INCREASE REMAIN. END SUMMARY:

2. BERLIN NEWSPAPERS REPORTED FEB 22 PA/BA ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUMMER IGS SCHEDULE TO BECOME EFFECTIVE APRIL 1. MOST PAPERS CONCENTRATED ON ELIMINATION OF SIXTEEN DAILY FLIGHTS AS COMPARED TO 1974, BUT TAGESSPIEGEL OBSERVED THAT AIRLINE ANNOUNCEMENT MADE NO MENTION OF IMPLEMENTATION DATES FOR MAJOR PROPOSED CHANGES IN IGS; NAMELY, MOVE TO TEGEL, ROUTE SWAP, AND FARE INCREASE. ARTICLE WENT ON THAT DATE FOR EACH CHANGE HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED BUT WAS NOT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECONFIRMED BY AIRLINES. ACCORDING TAGESSPIEGEL,

BERLIN AIRPORT COMPANY (BFG) DIRECTOR GROSCH SAID HE WAS "ASTOUNDED" THAT AIRLINES HAD NOT MADE BINDING STATEMENT RE TEGEL MOVE SINCE ALL DEADLINES WERE BEING MET AND AIRLINES WERE AGREED IN WRITING TO MOVING ON APRIL 7-8.

3. IN ACCOMPANYING HOSTILE EDITORIAL, TAGESSPIEGEL ATTACKED THE CONFUSION OVER DATES FOR IMPENDING CHANGES IN BERLIN AIR SERVICES. PICKING UP ON GROSCH REMARK, EDITORIAL INTIMATED AIRLINES -- "OR AT LEAST ONE OF THEM" -- WERE ONLY WAITING UNTIL AFTER BERLIN ELECTIONS TO REVIVE PLANS TO REMAIN AT TEMPELHOF. EDITORIAL CONCLUDED SARCASTICALLY THAT QUICK ALLIED DECISIONS REMAINED ONLY HOPE FOR THOSE BERLINERS "WHO STILL WANTED TO FLY" SO THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW "WHEN, WITH WHOM, FROM WHERE, AND AT WHAT PRICE."

4. WHEN MISSION CHECKED WITH PA AND BA RE TEGEL MOVE, BOTH ACKNOWLEDGED IN PRINCIPLE THEIR AGREEMENT TO MOVE BUT POINTED OUT NEITHER HAD COMPLETED AND SIGNED TEGEL RENTAL AGREEMENT WITH BFG. GROSCH CONFIRMED TO MISSION THAT RENTAL AGREEMENTS STILL BEING NEGOTIATED. HE EXPLAINED HIS NEWSPAPER COMMENT AS REFERENCE TO WRITTEN MINUTES OF JANUARY BFG-AIRLINE MEETING IN WHICH ALL PARTIES AGREED TO POSTPONE TEGEL MOVE FROM APRIL 1 TO APRIL 7. GROSCH COMMENTED IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO SAY OTHERWISE IN PRE-ELECTION ATMOSPHERE IN BERLIN. GROSCH BELIEVES MATTER COULD BE ADDRESSED MORE RATIONALLY AFTER ELECTIONS OVER.

5. COMMENT: BFG-AIRLINE REVIEW OF TEGEL MOVE AFTER ELECTIONS OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH BY MID-MARCH MORE REALISTIC DATE FOR MOVE. RESOLUTION BY ALLIED GOVERNMENTS OF REMAINING UNCERTAINTIES OVER FARE INCREASE AND ROUTE SWAP AT SAME TIME WOULD MINIMIZE FUTURE HOSTILE COMMENT AND WOULD REMOVE UNCERTAINTIES NOW FACING BERLIN TRAVELING PUBLIC. GEORGE

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